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WILLIAM A. STEIGER  
6TH DISTRICT, WISCONSIN

Room 1023  
LONGWORTH OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
CODE 202: 225-2476

*algeny genetic disease*

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MEMBER:  
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
AND LABOR

# Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

DISTRICT OFFICES:  
201 POST OFFICE BUILDING  
OSHKOSH, WIS. 54901  
CODE 414: 231-6333  
205 POST OFFICE BUILDING  
SHEBOYGAN, WIS. 53081

*file*  
June 22, 1970

Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
Stanford Medical Center  
300 Pasteur  
Palo Alto, California 94304

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I read with great interest the newspaper reports on your presentation before the House Appropriations Committee. As I believe one of my assistants, Joel Margolis, mentioned in an earlier letter to you, I have become interested in the general area of the societal implications of technological advances and scientific discoveries.

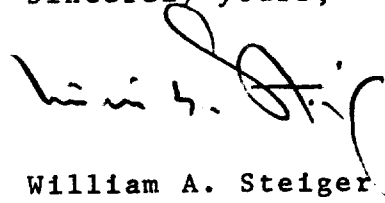
The subject of potential genetic change seems to me to be perhaps the most important scientific discovery which may occur in the remainder of this century. The consequences, as you noted in your statement, are truly startling. I believe that we, the public's representatives, and the public must begin to consider the implications of these forthcoming events.

I would like to know what you believe that I, as a Member of the House of Representatives, can do in this area. Do you have any proposals in addition to your suggestion for a national task force to identify and coordinate research in this area? Should the President and/or the Congress establish a commission to study the implications of the genetic revolution? If so, should we do this before or after we have created the national task force? I do not have to tell you that when the public truly becomes aware of the potential of these new discoveries, there is likely to be a strong hue and cry--some will say that this is tampering with God's will, others will want the government to move ahead full speed, many will be deeply concerned. They have a right to be concerned. The question is to try and analyze these matters in a non-emotionally charged atmosphere. Perhaps if we start now we can do this.

*STEIGER, W.*

I look forward to your comments with great interest.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William A. Steiger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

William A. Steiger  
Member of Congress

WAS:jm